



CITY OF  
**FALCON HEIGHTS**

2077 W. Larpenteur Avenue  
Falcon Heights, MN 55113-5594

email: [mail@falconheights.org](mailto:mail@falconheights.org)  
website: [www.falconheights.org](http://www.falconheights.org)  
April 10, 2015

*The City That Soars!*

Phone - (651) 792-7600  
Fax - (651) 792-7610

Chief Rich Hinrichs  
Falcon Heights Fire Department  
2077 W. Larpenteur Ave.  
Falcon Heights, MN 55113

RE: Letter of Reprimand

Dear Chief Hinrichs,

The email sent to Mayor Lindstrom on March 31, 2015 was deemed unprofessional. Your comments indicating that the mayor was against training for the Fire Department was inappropriate. As explained to you previously, the timing of your request was unrealistic due to the other issues involved in the Curtis Park project.

This letter serves as an official reprimand as to the inappropriate comments used towards a city official.

Sincerely,

Timothy Pittman  
Interim City Administrator

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FAMILIES, FIELDS AND FAIR

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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



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May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Re: Letter of Reprimand and Recap of April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Meeting

This letter is to document that you received a Letter of Reprimand dated April 10, 2015 from Interim City Administrator Tim Pittman. The letter outlined that on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 you sent an email to Mayor Lindstrom that was deemed unprofessional and included inappropriate comments to Mayor Lindstrom. As explained to you previously, the timing of your request was unrealistic due to the other issues involved in the Curtiss Field project.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 you attended a meeting with Mayor Lindstrom and Interim City Administrator Tim Pittman to discuss your inappropriate comments used towards a city official. Your response was unprofessional, so the meeting was not productive and had to be ended. You are encouraged to correct and improve your behavior or further action will be taken by the City Council.

By signing this document, you are acknowledging its receipt. Whether or not you agree with the content of the Letter of Reprimand, you agree to comply with the city's expectation of consistent professionalism in the conduct of your duties. This document will be placed in your personnel file.

City Employee

5-5-15

Date

City Administrator

5.5.15

Date

FAMILIES, FIELDS AND FAIR



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July 14, 2015

Re: Letter of Deficiency

To: Falcon Heights Fire Chief Rich Hinrichs,

This letter constitutes a formal Letter of Deficiency issued in response to your performance and conduct as Chief of the City of Falcon Heights Fire Department. An incident occurring on July 13, 2015 has given the City cause for serious concern. Failure to remedy the deficiencies identified in this letter, improve your performance, and meet the City's expectations will result in action up to and including the proposed immediate discharge of your employment.

You and I met July 13, 2015 to discuss a letter you posted addressing Fire Department personnel attempting to enact a residency requirement. As discussed in the meeting, City policy does not have a residency requirement. Your letter also states that if Fire Department personnel do not meet the requirements within one (1) year that they will be terminated. Department heads do not have authority to terminate an employee regardless of what a department policy states. Based on City policy, only the Council has that authority. The Fire Department is not independent of the City and all City Staff is under the umbrella and management of the City Administrator.

We also discussed your disapproval of my management style and my questioning of Fire Department purchases during that discussion you called Finance Director Roland Olson "old and senile". I immediately told you that this type language was unacceptable and that we do not demean City staff and co-workers.

*The City has a "Respectful Workplace Policy."* The policy describes different types of disrespectful behavior which include Offensive Behavior.

***Offensive Behavior*** - may include such actions as: rudeness, angry outbursts, inappropriate humor, vulgar obscenities, name calling, disrespectful language, or any other behavior regarded as offensive to a reasonable person. It is not possible to anticipate in this policy every example of offensive behavior. Accordingly, employees are encouraged to discuss with their fellow employees and supervisor what is regarded as offensive, taking into account the sensibilities of employees and the possibility of public reaction. Although the standard for how



*employees treat each other and the general public will be the same throughout the City, there may be differences between work groups about what is appropriate in other circumstances unique to a work group. If an employee is unsure whether a particular behavior is appropriate, the employee should request clarification from their supervisor or the City Administrator.*

Your calling Finance Director Roland Olson as "old and senile" is a clear violation of the City's "Respectful Workplace Policy" under Offensive Behavior because it was descriptive to an employee's age and the uses of the words are disrespectful and unprofessional. This type of behavior was also discussed and documented in the Letter of Reprimand dated 5-04-15 regarding an email you sent to Mayor Lindstrom that was deemed unprofessional and included inappropriate comments to the Mayor.

As a result of your having attempted unilaterally implement changes to City policy regarding employee residency and having made unnecessary and unacceptable verbal statements to and/or about the City's Mayor and Finance Director, the City has determined that you engaged in unprofessional and inappropriate conduct warranting written disciplinary notice and requiring your compliance with the following directives

1. You are directed to refrain from making any changes to Fire Department policy without first consulting with and obtaining approval from the City Administrator and/or City Council.
2. You are required to immediately discontinue your behavior and comments that would constitute as a violation of City Policy.
3. You are directed to interact with the Mayor, Counsel, City Administrator, Department Heads, City staff and employees, and members of the community at all times in a respectful, professional, open and forthright manner.
4. You are directed not to retaliate in any way against any individual, including but not limited to, anyone you believe to have been involved in providing or gathering information leading to the disciplinary decision in this matter.

You must immediately give your attention to the referenced areas of deficiency and following the directives set forth in this Letter of Deficiency to ensure that the conduct referenced herein does not repeat itself. I am available to work with you toward the correction of these deficiencies. However it should be made clear to you that if your behavior continues and is not corrected in an immediate and timely fashion or fail to follow the directives you have been given, you will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, demotion or termination by the City Council.

By signing this document, you are acknowledging its receipt. Whether or not you agree with the content of the Letter of Deficiency, you agree to comply with the City's expectation of consistent

professionalism in the conduct of your duties. This document will be placed in your personnel file. The City hopes for and expects the best from you. If you have any questions concerning this matter or wish to meet to discuss it further, please feel free to contact me.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Employee

7-22-15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator

7.22.15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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March 5, 2018

Re: Final Letter of Deficiency

To: Falcon Heights Fire Chief Rich Hinrichs,

This letter constitutes a formal Final Letter of Deficiency issued in response to your performance and conduct as Chief of the City of Falcon Heights Fire Department. An incident occurring on November 7, 2017 between Captain Bryan Sullivan and Ben Smith has given the City cause for serious concern. Failure to remedy the deficiencies identified in this letter, improve your performance, and meet the City's expectations will result in action up to and including the proposed immediate discharge of your employment.

As Fire Chief, you are responsible for all of the activities of the fire department, including the behavior of all personnel, employees and volunteers. To ensure the highest quality service to the residents who employ us all, the city requires that members of the department display exemplary professionalism.

Unfortunately, however, over time I have observed a casual culture of unprofessionalism from a member of your Department and yourself. This culture was displayed most recently in the incident on November 7, 2017 in which Captain Bryan Sullivan pulled down the pants of Firefighter Ben Smith after completion of a training session on our premises. Although you were not present that night, the responsibility for the incident still rests with you as the manager.

*The City has a "Respectful Workplace Policy."* The policy describes different types of disrespectful behavior which include Offensive Behavior.

**Offensive Behavior** - *may include such actions as: rudeness, angry outbursts, inappropriate humor, vulgar obscenities, name calling, disrespectful language, or any other behavior regarded as offensive to a reasonable person. It is not possible to anticipate in this policy every example of offensive behavior. Accordingly, employees are encouraged to discuss with their fellow employees and supervisor what is regarded as offensive, taking into account the sensibilities of employees and the possibility of public reaction. Although the standard for how employees treat each other and the general public will be the same throughout the City, there may be differences between work groups about what is appropriate in*

*other circumstances unique to a work group. If an employee is unsure whether a particular behavior is appropriate, the employee should request clarification from their supervisor or the City Administrator.*

As a result of your having attempted unilaterally implement changes to City policy regarding employee

1. You are required to immediately discontinue your behavior and comments that would constitute as a violation of City Policy.
2. You are directed to interact with the Mayor, Counsel, City Administrator, Department Heads, City staff and employees, and members of the community at all times in a respectful and professional.
3. You are directed not to retaliate in any way against any individual, including but not limited to, anyone you believe to have been involved in providing or gathering information leading to the disciplinary decision in this matter.
4. You are not authorized to represent or talk on behalf of the City and City Council. The City Administrator or his designee is the only person authorized by the City Council to talk on behalf of the City.

Other examples of violation of the "Respectful Workplace Policy" and/or your lack of understand of process is your reaction during a meeting that included soon to be Fire Marshall and Assistant Fire Chief in 2016. In which, you were instructed to leave the meeting due to your angry outburst (screaming and yelling). Another example is your communication to MnDOT for the Larpenteur and Snelling Project in which you contacted MnDOT representatives without consulting or authorization by the City Administrator.

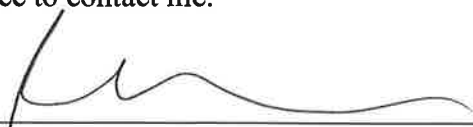
Another example that you have demonstrated that you do not understand the organizational structure was an email sent to Council Pam Harris on June 15, 2017. In the email, you copied the City Council, Mayor, St. Anthony (Police Chief Jon Mangseth and Captain Jeff Spiess, and Matthew Simpson (St. Paul), which you stated "To get St. Anthony to consider Falcon Heights is simple, request Mayor Lindstrom resign".

In the future, I will more carefully monitor the department and your behavior to ensure that it meets our standards. In particular, I will look to you to model appropriate respectful behavior and demand it of your subordinates.


You must immediately give your attention to the referenced areas of deficiency and following the directives set forth in this Letter of Deficiency to ensure that the conduct referenced herein does not repeat itself. I am available to work with your toward the correction of these deficiencies. **However, it should be made clear to you that if your**

**behavior continues and is not corrected in an immediate and timely fashion or fail to follow the directives you have been given, you will be subject to demotion or termination by the City Council.** This will be your second and final Letter of Deficiency.

By signing this document, you are acknowledging its receipt. Whether or not you agree with the content of the Letter of Deficiency, you agree to comply with the City's expectation of consistent professionalism in the conduct of your duties. This document will be placed in your personnel file. The City hopes for and expects the best from you. If you have any questions concerning this matter or wish to meet to discuss it further, please feel free to contact me.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Employee

3/5/18  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator

3-5-18  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date